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KDFWR purchases bank fishing access to the Lake Cumberland tailwater

Fisheries Division is pleased to announce the Department's recent acquisition of a new tract of land along the Lake Cumberland Tailwater (the state's premiere coldwater tailwater trout fishery).

The recent acquisition includes approximately 39.6 acres and is commonly referred to as "Rainbow Run" by many trout anglers.

The newly acquired bank fishing area is located in Russell County and is situated on the right descending bank of the river, approximately 12 miles downstream of Wolf Creek Dam. The total area acquired includes a 10.4 acre island and adjacent 29.2 acre parcel of land.

At present, there is no public access by roadway to this recently purchased bank fishing area. Because there is no public



Dave Dreves, fisheries program coordinator displays a quality brown trout taken on hook and line from Rainbow Run.

road access to this tract, anglers may currently only access this area by boat from the Cumberland Tailwater. Anglers fishing the Cumberland Tailwater are welcome to access the island by boat.

Acquisition of this site highlights the Department's concerted efforts to help increase public bank fishing access on the tailwater, as well as throughout the Commonwealth.

"Rainbow Run is one of my five standardized sampling sites for trout on the tailwater," explains Dave Dreves, fisheries program coordinator for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Re-

sources. "Survey samples show exceptionally high catch rates of brown trout of all sizes, and it is not uncommon for us to collect double the amount of brown trout compared to the other four sampling sites.

"This area also produces consistently high numbers of large brown and rainbow trout. In past sampling trips, it's rather common for us to collect many brown trout in excess of 5 lbs from the Rainbow Run area," he said.

Dreves believes this area offers trout a variety of ideal habitat that includes

[See "Access," page 9](#)

INSIDE:


5 Fishing Forecast

7 Quail exhibit

8 World record

WE GET MAIL

Letters to the Commissioner's Office

This email came from Terry Partin.

"I would like to express my most sincere appreciation to the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources for the outstanding programs administered by the agency. I remember a time when deer and turkey were practically non-existent in our state and when an elk herd was beyond anyone's wildest dreams. On December 11, 2011 I was present when my ten year old Grandson, John Luke Partin took a beautiful cow elk on Ivy Creek in Floyd County. He was one of the fortunate people who was drawn for an elk tag this year. I think all Kentuckians, hunters and non-hunters alike should take great pride in our state and the efforts that have been made to restore this tremendous resource to our commonwealth.

I realize that great deeds come as a result of much sacrifice and hard work. I have had the opportunity to work with employees of the Department in years past and am extremely aware of the exceptional and dedicated staff that have worked long and hard hours in order to see the Department's objectives succeed. My Grandson's elk hunt was a reminder of the dedication exhibited by your employees. When he was drawn for a cow elk tag I contacted Regional Wildlife Biologist **Steve Beam** to inquire about hunting opportunities in eastern Kentucky. I was amazed at the response I received. I truly expected advice on selecting an area based on past harvest data, but soon realized that he not only was willing to provide assistance and answer our questions, but was genuinely committed to helping this little ten year old harvest an elk. He personally escorted my grandson and I on a preseason trip to eastern Kentucky to help us become familiar with the area. While there he introduced us to Elk biologist **Will Bowling**, who proved to be an amazingly wonderful person and one of the most knowledgeable



Left to right: John Ray Partin, Will Bowling, Steve Beam, Terry Partin, and the hunter, John Luke Partin.

people I know.

Prior to the hunt Mr. Beam spent time scouting the area, talked to Elk biologist Bowling and secured maps for our use. He helped us secure reservations and accompanied us to our hunting destination all on his own time and expense. When John Luke was blessed with the opportunity to take a mature cow elk he was there to assist in every way he possibly could including taking three generation family pictures. Soon after the elk was on the ground Will Bowling was on hand and gave John Luke an outstanding lesson on the elk digestive system as he collected samples, checked for liver flukes and examined for fetus development. He gladly answered our many questions about elk then proceeded to use a winch truck to get the elk up a very steep 60 foot embankment. Will Bowling is much more than a fascinating elk specialist. He is a respected liaison between the Department, Coal Company representatives, neighboring land owners and the citizens of the commonwealth.

I am excited to see the new projects the Department will undertake in the future, with employees like Steve Beam and Will Bowling and countless others across

the state success is guaranteed.

The hunt was filmed by Wade Spencer of Life's Highway TV and will be seen by thousands across the United States."

The following email came through the Info Center email.

Mr. Michael Carter wrote, "I just wanted to say thank you for all of the hard work that each and every one of you do. And to congratulate **the Department** and **Dr. Gassett** on the recent acquisition of the property in Georgetown. It is rare in this day and time to find such a large tract of land, and now it can be enjoyed by everyone. It is great to see a proactive approach to providing more opportunities to sportsmen and women. Again, thank you."

This note came from David and Brenda Yoder.

"To all the **Fish and Wildlife staff that had a part in the land manager appreciation dinner**: Just a short note to say thanks for the good meal, the motel room, and the excellent hospitality. We feel honored to have been a part of the evening and enjoyed our stay in Frankfort immensely. Thanks so much and happy holidays to all of you all.

The following email came through the Info Center email.

Mr. Donnie Bunch wrote, "I would like to thank **F&W** for the opportunity to hunt Sandhill Cranes. I was only able to kill one, but it was the best table fare of any wild bird I have ever eaten. My son and daughter both loved it, and my son vows to put in for the season next year if you allow another season. I learned a lot from my many mistakes from hunting these very wary birds, and I hope for another season next winter also."

Mr. Bunch is a Life Member NRA and League of Kentucky Sportsman.



David Baker displays a nice smallmouth bass caught at a "secret" location in one of Kentucky's many quality stream fisheries.

Baker promoted in Fisheries Division

Fisheries Division is pleased to announce that **David Baker** was recently promoted to a Fisheries Biologist II in the Big Rivers Research section.

David is a five-year veteran of the Department and was first hired in 2006 as a summer aid in the Environmental Section working with Matt Thomas (Department Ichthyologist).

In the fall of 2006, David worked as a Conservation Education Program Leader in the I & E Division. In 2007, David was hired as a Fish and Wildlife Technician III in the Black Bass Research section. In 2009, he transferred to the Lake Fisheries Research section.

David earned a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management from Eastern Kentucky University, and has recently completed all necessary coursework to become certified by the American Fisheries Society.

Fisheries Division anticipates that he will bring a wealth of knowledge to this new position, specifically, his passion

for fishing streams and small rivers. "We are very excited to have David on board, particularly as we have decided to expand the research activities of the Big Rivers Research section," explains Gerry Buynak (Assistant Director of the Fisheries Division). "In addition to the types of research that was previously being conducted in the section, we are planning on expanding to evaluate the utility of sauger stockings in the Salt, Green, and Barren River systems.

"We plan to utilize this section to serve as the primary overseer of the lake sturgeon restoration efforts in the upper Cumberland River. Additionally, we want to expand our fisheries management into a variety of rivers throughout Kentucky that we believe to be under-utilized by the anglers of Kentucky."

These rivers include the Ohio, Kentucky, Green, Salt, Barren, Nolin, and Licking Rivers (to simply name a few). This section will also conduct research on the impacts of non-native species (Asian

Carp) in river systems.

In this new position, David is most excited about the ability he will have to sample fish populations in areas that may have previously never been sampled by the Department. "I consider myself a stream and smaller river fisherman and these are the types of systems that I will be mostly working on," explains David. "Kentucky's streams and rivers can provide some outstanding fisheries. People may not believe me, but many of my most memorable fishing trips have occurred on smaller rivers such as the Salt or Barren River. I look forward to the opportunity to sample these and other systems, and hopefully enhance the recreational fisheries they have to offer."

David also is looking forward to the opportunity to work with a variety of staff throughout Kentucky. "Our fish and wildlife biologists do an exceptional job at managing the resources throughout the state. I look forward to being a part of that great management and offering my assistance whenever possible."

Akers relocates to Engineering office

In November, **John Akers** moved from Maintenance Branch Manager in the woodshop to the Engineering Division's main office at Pine Hill. John will be assisting with capital construction projects statewide, including maintenance and new construction. He will also be helping with special events. He may be reached at 564-5261.

John joined the department in 1989 and has worked in many capacities in the 23 years with the department. Some of the many hats he has worn over the years include Camp Webb Superintendent, Game Farm Superintendent and, now Engineering Technical Associate III. In his spare time he enjoys hunting and woodworking.

State Forestry, Fish and Wildlife acquire 2,500 acres for public use in Union County

The Kentucky Division of Forestry and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources have jointly acquired nearly 2,500 acres in Union County at the confluence of the Ohio and Tradewater rivers. The property will become the state's newest wildlife management area (WMA) and state forest.

The 2,484-acre site near Sturgis is a portion of one of the largest private landholdings in Kentucky. Purchase of the property - known locally as the Alcoa Property, or more recently as the Kimball Property - was made possible through the cooperation of private, public and non-profit agencies. It completes the first of a two-phase project to protect the area.

The property will provide public recreational opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, canoeing, wildlife viewing and other activities as a wildlife management area. It also will be managed to provide watershed and water quality protection; protection and recovery of endangered, threatened and rare species; preservation of existing cultural and geological treasures; and a sustainable forest. It will be permanently protected from development and agricultural conversion.

The entire property was purchased in early 2009 by an investment fund managed by The Forestland Group with cooperation from The Conservation Fund and KDFWR. The Conservation Fund partners with community, government and corporate organizations to help them fulfill their conservation priorities. The purchase of the entire property by The Forestland Group's investment fund enabled KDFWR and KDF to acquire and protect this tract.

State Forestry and Kentucky Fish and Wildlife assembled \$6,681,780 (including administrative fees) to purchase the tract. Kentucky's congressional delegation helped secure \$3.25 million in federal

money through the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program (FLP), the most significant share of the project.

The necessary non-federal matching funds were supplied from a variety of sources. The Nature Conservancy, one of the nation's largest environmental non-profit organizations, assisted in obtaining funds from Duke Energy and the Crounse Corporation.

Duke Energy, a generator and distributor of electric power and natural gas, provided \$1.75 million. Its funds became available as part of a consent decree requiring it to fund supplemental environmental mitigation projects. Crounse Corporation, an industry leader in river transportation, contributed \$50,000.

"What is unique about this project is the size of the acquisition and the number of public and private partners that had to successfully work together to permanently protect this incredibly beautiful part of Kentucky," said Terry Cook, state director for The Nature Conservancy. "Public and private monies are limited, but by working together we still can have incredible success."

State Forestry utilized \$1 million of its Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Funds. These funds are derived from nature license plate sales, environmental fines and a portion of the unmined minerals tax.

The Indiana Bat Conservation Fund supplied \$580,000 because this forested tract provides valuable habitat for this federally-endangered species. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife paid the various administrative fees.

"The Division of Forestry is very excited about this new wildlife management area and state forest," said State Forestry Director Leah MacSwords. "This joint venture conserves a valuable forest ecosystem and showcases the importance

of a well-managed forest."

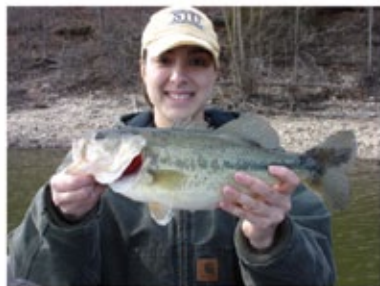
Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Dr. Jon Gassett said the acquisition is an example of groups working together to benefit the public. "We have partnered closely with The Conservation Fund almost a quarter-century to help secure lands in Kentucky for public outdoor recreation," he said. "They have protected nearly seven million acres across the country, and they were instrumental in helping us protect such Kentucky lands that are now Peabody, Obion and Sloughs WMAs."

Ray Herndon is director of the Lower Mississippi Region for The Conservation Fund. "This project demonstrates a relatively new but growing model for conservation where forest management organizations - like The Forestland Group - are helping to conserve land for public outdoor recreation," he said. "The success of this partnership has facilitated the protection of a property that is a true natural gem for the Commonwealth. The new WMA is a win-win for Kentucky because it will support and create outdoor recreation related jobs and provide new hunting and fishing opportunities for sportsmen and women."

The property will be jointly managed as a wildlife management area and a state forest, using the same goals as the Knobs and Marrowbone areas. State forest properties use the ecosystem management approach to ensure biological diversity and sustainable use. These areas are working forests with demonstration areas to promote good forestry practices.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife and the Kentucky Division of Forestry are developing a management plan for this area that will include the necessary regulations. The area will be officially open to the public later this year.

2012 FISHING FORECAST AND TIPS



Welcome to the 2012 Fishing Forecast for Kentucky's major fisheries. The forecast is based on 2011 fall population surveys, creel surveys, fish stockings, and historical knowledge of the fisheries. This handbook is designed to assist anglers in planning their fishing trips and improving their fishing success. Additional fishing information is available from the Department's website at fish.ky.gov or by obtaining copies of the 2012 Sport Fishing and Boating Guide available at most sporting goods stores. The Kentucky Trout Waters brochure is contained in the 2012 Fishing and Boating Guide.

To locate fishing access sites in Kentucky, visit our website and click on "Fishing & Boating," then "Where to Fish," and finally "Find a Place to Fish." You will be able to search for your favorite water bodies and get directions to all major boat launches and access sites.

Closing day of the 2012 fishing season starts March 1, with the new year's license, so take a trip to your local sporting goods store, get online at fish.ky.gov, or call 1-877-558-2431 to purchase your 2012 fishing license.

The Fishing Forecast was partially financed through funds provided by your purchase of fishing equipment and motor boat fuels under the Federal Sport Fish Restoration Program.



2012 Fishing Forecast

"In most of our lakes and reservoirs, our fisheries biologists maintain long-term databases on the abundance and growth rates of various sport fish species. We utilize these databases to help identify and highlight what sport fish species are doing well at each lake."

At the back of the 2012 Fishing Forecast, Jeff Ross has developed a "cheat sheet" that helps anglers quickly identify hotspots. "Anglers can utilize this section by simply going to the lake they like to fish and seeing what fish species are anticipated to be excellent during 2012."

For those anglers who enjoy targeting a specific species (i.e. smallmouth bass, musky, or redear sunfish), the cheat sheet allows you to quickly determine which lakes and reservoirs you need to focus your efforts on."

Another interesting component to the 2012 Fishing Forecast is the section labeled "New Up-and-Comers."

"The species and locations listed in this section are those fisheries that have made significant improvements from previous years. These are the lakes or species that anglers should pay particular attention to as many of these fisheries are outstanding," explains Ross.

One particular up-and-comer includes crappie and white bass fishing at Cave Run Lake. "We saw a substantial increase in the number of anglers catching limits of quality size crappie at Cave Run Lake in 2011. And interestingly enough, anglers caught crappie all year long, not just during the spring spawning season," says **Fred Howes**, fisheries program coordinator who manages the fish population at Cave Run Lake.

"Historically, Cave Run Lake has contained an abundance of milfoil that offers great habitat and hiding places for crappie, thus making it more challenging for anglers to target them. With the record rainfall in 2011, Cave Run Lake water levels were dramatically higher than normal, and

this prevented the milfoil from becoming as established as it had in the past." Howes believes that the lack of weeds made crappie more vulnerable to anglers in 2011.

"With the weeds reduced, or completely gone in some areas, crappie became concentrated on brushpiles, submerged trees, and other forms of man-made cover. This allowed anglers to target them effectively." Howes expects the crappie fishery to remain good as a result of the strong 2009 year-class. "Growth rates of crappie in Cave Run Lake are slow, often taking 4-5 years for crappie to reach 10 inches. The 2009 year-class is rapidly coming of age and should provide anglers quality catches over the next several years."

In addition to the crappie fishery, the white bass population seems to have rebounded rather well in Cave Run Lake. "White bass are a cyclic species, meaning you typically get a good year-class produced and then often several years of poor production. Fortunately, the one good year-class is often adequate to carry the fishery for several years until the next good year-class," explains Howes.

At Cave Run Lake, anglers are catching excellent numbers of 13-15 inch white bass, with trophy fish being around 18 inches. "Anglers target white bass in feeding jumps beginning in June in the lower third of the lake. These jumps can occur anytime, although mornings and evenings seem to be the most consistent.

Anglers typically target white bass in the jumps using kastmaster spoons or small white spinnerbaits. Once the jumps die down, anglers can catch lingering white bass by trolling smaller, shad colored, crankbaits."

Another up-and-comer is the smallmouth bass fishery at Laurel River Lake. This fishery has improved for the past several years and presently shows no signs of declining in the near future.

We've definitely been lucky thus far in terms of the winter of 2011/2012 (knock on wood).

Relatively mild temperatures and at least for the majority of Kentucky, a lack of snow and ice have made for a tolerable winter season. Many anglers have had the opportunity to take advantage of good weather and fish much later into the season than previous years have allowed.

One thing is for certain, spring is just around the corner and so is the 2012 fishing season. The cure for cabin fever is almost here.

Annually, the Fisheries Division compiles a forecast of what anglers should experience across the Commonwealth during the 2012 fishing season.

Jeff Ross, Fisheries Assistant Director, helps with the development of this publication and considers this an essential piece of information for anglers across Kentucky.

"The Fishing Forecast gives anglers a general idea of what the fishing should be like in lakes, rivers, and reservoirs in Kentucky." He explains that the forecast is developed by analyzing fish sampling data collected during 2011 and then comparing it to long-term datasets collected on individual lakes.

See "Forecast," page 11

Western Fisheries District adds fish habitat in Blood River, Kentucky Lake

Following the holiday season, staff from the Western Fisheries District office have been hard at work creating fish habitat at Kentucky Lake.

"The Home Depot store in Paducah contacted us following the holiday season and offered to donate around 135 unsold Christmas trees," explains fisheries program coordinator **Paul Rister**. "We took around 85 of these Christmas trees and created several large areas of new fish habitat in the back of Blood River."

For those not familiar, Blood River is arguably one of the most popular embayments for crappie and bass fishing in the Kentucky portion of Kentucky Lake.

The back of Blood River is a wide expanse of mud flats that is used as spawning habitat for a variety of species including crappie, bass, bluegill, and redear sunfish. "With the lake at close to winter pool, the back of Blood River is basically an exposed mud flat. We placed groupings of Christmas trees parallel to small drainage ditches and canals along the mud flats in the back of Blood River," says Rister.

"We use wooden stakes to anchor the trees and taller white poles help identify the location of these fish attractor sites once the water level returns to summer pool. At summer pool, these trees will have 3-4 feet of water over them. They create perfect spawning habitat for crappie and bass, as well as acting as fish attractor sites outside of the spawning season."



Groupings of Christmas trees are placed adjacent to small ditches and canals in the back of Blood River embayment to act as spawning habitat. During spring, when water levels rise, crappie and bass utilize these small ditches and canals as highways to spawning areas. *Paul Rister photo*





Salato quail aviary construction is underway

Construction of the first phase of a new Salato Wildlife Education Center exhibit – The Quail Aviary – is underway thanks to the generous donation of time and labor by Jackson Construction and General Contracting of Frankfort.

Until weather prevented further work, a team from this company worked hard every day to complete the main structure of the aviary. The company plans to continue its donation of equipment, and employees are volunteering efforts on weekends until the project is completed.

There will be four sections of the exhibit, designed to personalize a quail's life. Visitors may enter the exhibit from two directions. In one direction, the visitor becomes a mother quail in search of her chick. In the opposite direction, the chick must find its mother. Along the way, it must choose between good and bad habitat options in order to survive.

The aviary is large enough to support 50 quail, but we plan to start with 30. The structure will be surrounded by a vanishing coil mesh, which will contain the quail and discourage predation.



As visitors enter and exit via a raised boardwalk, the typical bobwhite quail call will play. Signs inside the aviary will address biological information, habitat loss and quail as an umbrella species, and work being done by our agency to restore prairie habitat.

As visitors exit, they will be greeted by a 2-D, larger than life female quail with a sign reading, "I typically lay a clutch of 10 to 12 eggs. All of my eggs have hatched, but I am missing one of my chicks. Can you make it down the trail and help me

find him?"

The next exhibit element is the Food and Water Trail. An overhead sign will read, "You need food and water to survive. Which path will you take?" On one side of the path will be mowed, groomed fescue and a lawnmower, which children can climb on and pretend to drive (all dangerous parts removed). On the opposite side will be quality habitat at a WMA, including a giant cup plant for water and native grasses. Flip signs on both sides will be lifted to search for food. On the fescue side the message under each will be "Nothing here! Keep looking."

The 3rd exhibit element is the Shelter Trail. A huge sculpture of a red-tailed hawk will loom over the visitors and a sign will read, "You need to hide from a red-tailed hawk. Which way will you go?" On the fescue side of the trail, obstacles will be placed, making walking difficult. On the WMA side a tunnel will be created through the prairie grasses which visitors

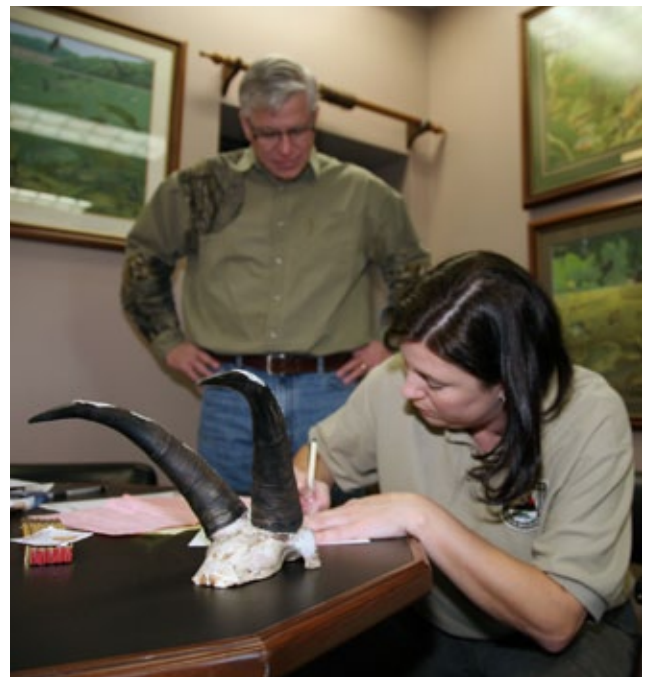
See "Aviary," page 11

GREEN WING ADVENTURE AT BALLARD'S PO PO HOLE

Conservation officers Tony Dunker, Kyle Webb, Scott Barrow, Sgt. Garry Clark, and Capt. Rick Mehlbauer and Labrador retriever Buck helped several youth waterfowl hunters in their annual Green Wing hunt at the Po Po Hole in Ballard County this season. Vince E. Cardosi and his father, Dick T. Cardosi of Fort Mitchell, and Tayler Davis and mom, Lisa Davis of Hazard, joined the officers for the hunt and a breakfast.



NEW WORLD RECORD



Northern Kentucky resident Troy Shelton (left) awaits the final tally of his mountain goat horns being scored by Tina Brunjes. Shelton's trophy, taken last October in British Columbia, exceeded the existing Boone and Crockett Club world record by 1/8 inch. *Dave Baker photo*

2011 youth deer hunt during free weekend

On December 31, G.O.D Ministries, Riverbend Whitetails, and staff from the Higginson/Henry WMA made it possible for four youth hunters to go whitetail deer hunting.

G.O.D (Great Outdoors Disciples) Ministries selected the four youth hunters based on community involvement, willingness to help others, and for going above and beyond what was expected while hosting other outdoor and hunting related events.

Riverbend Whitetails provided the area to hunt on, blinds, a guide, and opened their lodge and bunkhouse so



everyone could spend the night and enjoy a memorable hunt.

H&H staff acted as a liaison between the two groups, put up blinds, and acted as guides for the young hunters.

The morning of the 31st was slow with no deer taken, but the afternoon hunt resulted in five successful antlerless deer hunts!

Some say success is temporary, however memories will last a life time. From the smiles on the young hunters faces and the excitement in their voices as they retold the stories of their hunts and close encounters with other wildlife during the hunts, there remains no doubt these memories will never fade!

"Access," continued

relatively shallow, gravel shoals that are interspaced with numerous deeper scour holes and woody debris. "The Rainbow Run shoal extends all the way across the river and is more than 0.6 miles long. It will be prime water for wading anglers to access the tailwater and is large enough to accommodate a large number of anglers fishing at the same time. It will also provide a good spot for boating anglers to stop, stretch their legs, and wade fish."

The Fisheries Division thanks Tony Wheatley for his efforts to spearhead this acquisition in a smooth and timely fashion. The Fisheries Division also appreciates the efforts of the Division of Real Properties in finalizing all aspects of this important bank fishing access location.

This public bank fishing area was purchased using Sport Fish Restoration funds. Sport Fish Restoration Funds are federal funds derived from excise taxes on motorboat fuels and sport fishing equipment.

Sport Fish Restoration Funds are apportioned to State Fish and Wildlife



Aerial photograph of the new bank fishing area recently acquired by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. The area, commonly referred to as "Rainbow Run," will offer anglers prime access to one of Kentucky's premiere shoals on the Lake Cumberland Tailwater.

Agencies based upon the number of paid sport fishing licenses in each state. This land purchase is a great example of sport fish angler tax dollars being used to

benefit anglers.

For more information on the public fishing area, please contact Ryan Oster at (502) 564-3400 ext. 4461.



TAYLORSVILLE WMA

Happy and successful participants in the Taylorsville Lake WMA and State Park December and January quota hunts were quick to show off prizes. WMA Manager Bill Mitchell documented their successes with these photos.



Timesheet change

In our ongoing effort to simplify the KDFWR timesheet process, employ-

ees are now able to "electronically sign" timesheets for submission to the Human Resources Branch. Therefore, effective with the January 15, 2012 payroll, all

timesheets shall be submitted by email, and hard (paper) copies will no longer be required. For more information, please contact your supervisor.

“Forecast,” continued

“The smallmouth bass population at Laurel River Lake is doing exceptionally well due to the fact that we have multiple, good year-classes of fish currently present in the lake,” explains **John Williams**, fisheries program coordinator who manages the fish population at Laurel River Lake.

“Several years ago, we modified the regulations for smallmouth bass to an 18-inch minimum size limit and two fish daily creel,” said Williams. “That regulation, coupled with high catch-and-release rates by the majority of anglers has allowed the smallmouth bass fishery to improve substantially.”

He explains that the variety of forage in the lake, which includes crayfish, gizzard shad, threadfin shad, alewives, and various minnow species also helps sup-

port fast growth rates for smallmouth bass. “Growth of smallmouth bass in Laurel River Lake is good and we see that on average it takes three years to get the fish to 13.5 inches. Fish typically reach the legal size limit of 18-inches by age six.

So when is the best time to target Laurel River Lake for smallmouth bass? “By reputation, Laurel is a great winter fishery,” explains Williams. “From October –December, you can find a good deal of fish relatively shallow (less than 15 feet). Once winter really sets in, the fish move deep (30-50 feet) and tend to congregate in the lower third of the lake. Then in March, smallmouth bass move shallow again.” Anglers should target main lake points and secondary points in major creeks. Many anglers target these areas with jig and grub combinations, shad imitating crankbaits, and swimbaits. “My fa-

vorite is a ¼ oz jig with a three-inch curly tail (pearl or chartreuse). Fish it slowly next to long, tapering points that drop off into deep water,” explains Williams.

Anglers can view the 2012 Fishing Forecast by going online to web address fw.ky.gov/pdf/2012fishingforecast.pdf.

For those without access to the internet, please contact the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources at (800) 858-1549 and ask that a copy be mailed to you.

On behalf of the Fisheries Division, we wish you good luck during the 2012 fishing season and we hope to see you on the water. Please remember to purchase your 2012 fishing license prior to March 1, 2012.

For more information about the 2012 Fishing Forecast, please contact your local fisheries biologist office or call 1-800-858-1549.

“Aviary,” continued

can crawl through to escape predation. The hawk sculpture is the work of Louisville artist Patrick White.

Last is exhibit element #4, the Lost Chick. A sign overhead will read, “You found your chick!” On one side will be three larger than life, fiberglass quail eggs, cracked in half as though the chicks had

just hatched. These will be large enough for a 12-year-old to crawl into for a photo. On the other side will be a larger than life quail chick, sturdy enough for children to climb. The chick and eggs will be manufactured by Bree’s Studio, the same company that created the giant striped bass for the Fisheries Exhibit.

As visitors exit the exhibit from either direction, a sign will read, “Help

the KDFWR restore prairie habitat by purchasing your hunting license.” Likewise, an oversized hunting license made of dry-erase material or chalk-board at each side will allow visitors to add their name to the license.

Aside from the work donated by Jackson Construction, this exhibit is being funded through donations to the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

